

Silent Tactic withdrawn from Derby with injury

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOUISVILLE — Silent Tactic is out of the Kentucky Derby because of a foot injury, trainer Mark Casse said Wednesday, the first change to the field of 20 horses for the first leg of the Triple Crown.

Silent Tactic opened at odds of 13-1 on the morning line. His exit means Great White is in.

"You can't run in the Kentucky Derby and not be 100%," Casse said at his barn at Churchill Downs. "It's very, very slight. It's very slight, so that's the good news. The timing's poor, but it's not a big deal and that's the most important thing."

Casse compared the horse's ailment to a fingernail separation, which is painful and enough to lead to him and owner John Oxley to make the decision to scratch Silent Tactic more than 72 hours before the race.

"It wasn't a tough decision," Casse said. "It's not tough because we're always going to try to do what we feel is best for the horse, Mr. Oxley and our entire

group."

The most difficult part for Casse is this means jockey Cristian Torres will have to wait to ride in the Kentucky Derby for the first time. Casse said the call to skip the Derby was made early to allow preparations to begin to run Silent Tactic in the Preakness Stakes at Laurel Park on May 16.

"Today we start preparing for the Preakness," Casse said. "And the quicker we made the decision — we could've held on for another day or two — but then it would slow down our chances of getting to the Preakness."

The timing is beneficial for those around Great White, who was first on the also-entered list and was initially set as a 50-1 long shot.

"We're just delighted to have confirmation that we did get in and we draw in so early," trainer John Ennis said. "It's only Wednesday, so everybody's thrilled and over the moon."

The big, and still growing, gray colt is coming off a fifth-place finish April 4 in the Blue Grass Stakes at Keeneland.

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